

CLAIMS

1. A method of configuring a product, where the product
is to be assembled from a plurality of components, each
5 component being available in at least one variant, the
method comprising the steps of

presenting to a user, via a user interface, a first plu-
rality of variants of a first one of said plurality of
components;

10 receiving from the user an indication of a first variant
selected from the first plurality of variants;

presenting to the user via the user interface a graphical
representation of the first variant;

characterised in that the method further comprises the
15 steps of

presenting to the user, via the user interface, a second
plurality of variants of a second one of said plurality
of components;

receiving from the user an indication of a second variant
20 selected from the second plurality of variants;

presenting to the user, via the user interface, a graphi-
cal representation of the first selected variant of the
first component in a predetermined relationship to the
second selected variant of the second component.

25 2. The method according to claim 1, characterised in
that the method further comprises the step of graphically
animating the positioning of the second variant of the

second component in the predetermined relationship to the first variant of the first component.

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3. The method according to any one of the claims 1 and 2, characterised in that the method further comprises the 5 step of interactively animating the positioning of the second variant of the second component in the predetermined relationship to the first variant of the first component, where the interactively animated positioning is controlled by user commands.

10 4. The method according to any one of the claims 1 through 3, characterised in that the graphical representation of the first variant of the first component in the predetermined relationship to the second variant of the second component is a three-dimensional rendering of the 15 first variant of the first component in the predetermined relationship to the second variant of the second component.

5. The method according to any one of the claims 1 through 4, characterised in that the method further comprises the step of changing the displayed representation 20 of the first variant of the first component in the predetermined relationship to the second variant of the second component in response to user commands, where the changing of the displayed representation corresponds to operations selected from the class of operations comprising 25 rotate, flip, pan, and zoom.

6. The method according to any one of the claims 1 through 5, characterised in that the method further comprises the step of animating the displayed representation

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of the first variant of the first component in the predetermined relationship to the second variant of the second component in response to user commands.

7. The method according to any one of the claims 1 through 6, characterised in that the step of presenting to a user via a user interface a selected one of the first and second plurality of variants of the corresponding first or second component further comprises the step of limiting the presented plurality of variants to a subset of the corresponding first or second plurality of variants indicated as being available by a set of inventory data received from an inventory management system.

8. The method according to any one of the claims 1 through 7, characterised in that the method further comprises the step of transmitting ordering information to a production management system, the order information including configuration data identifying the first variant of the first component and the second variant of the second component.

9. A system for customising a product, where the product is assembled from a plurality of components, the system comprising

first display means adapted to present a first plurality of variants of a first one of said plurality of components;

first input means adapted to receive an indication of a first variant selected from the first plurality of variants;

second display means adapted to present a graphical representation of the first selected variant;

characterised in that the system further comprises

third display means adapted to present a second plurality

5 of variants of a second one of said plurality of components;

second input means adapted to receive an indication of a second variant selected from the second plurality of variants;

10 the second display means is adapted to present a graphical representation of the first selected variant of the first component in a predetermined relationship to the second selected variant of the second component.

10. The system according to claim 9, characterised in
15 that the system further comprises first processing means
adapted to generate a graphical animation of the posi-
tioning of the second variant of the second component in
the predetermined relationship to the first variant of
the first component.

20 11. The system according to claim 10, characterised in
that the system further comprises third input means
adapted to receive user commands for controlling the
graphical animation.

12. The system according to any one of the claims 9
25 through 11, characterised in that the graphical represen-
tation of the first variant of the first component in the
predetermined relationship to the second variant of the
second component is a three-dimensional rendering of the

first variant of the first component in the predetermined relationship to the second variant of the second component.

13. The system according to any one of the claims 9
5 through 12, characterised in that the system comprises fourth input means adapted to receive user commands corresponding to operations selected from the class of operations comprising rotate, flip, pan, and zoom; and the second display means is adapted to change the displayed
10 representation of the first variant of the first component in the predetermined relationship to the second variant of the second component in response to the received user commands.

14. The system according to any one of the claims 9
15 through 13, characterised in that the system further comprises second processing means adapted to generate an animation of the displayed representation of the first variant of the first component in the predetermined relationship to the second variant of the second component in
20 response to user commands.

15. The system according to any one of the claims 9 through 14, characterised in that a selected one of the first and second display means is adapted to limit the presented corresponding first or second plurality of variants to a subset of the corresponding first or second plurality of variants indicated as being available by a set of inventory data received from an inventory management system.

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16. The system according to any one of the claims 9 through 15, characterised in that the system further comprises transmitting means adapted to transmit order information to a production management system, the order information including configuration data identifying the first variant of the first component and the second variant of the second component.

17. Use of a method according to any one of the claims 1 through 8 in a build-to-order assembly system, where a product is assembled from pre-fabricated components.

18. Use of a method according to any one of the claims 1 through 8 for customising a medical application device.

19. A computer program comprising program code means for performing all the steps of any one of the claims 1 through 8 when said program is run on a computer.

20. A computer program product comprising program code means stored on a computer readable medium for performing a method of any one of the claims 1 through 8 when said computer program product is run on a computer.

21. A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave, comprising program code means for performing all the steps of any one of the claims 1 through 8 when said program is run on a computer.

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